

Fort Leaton
Presidio
Presidio County
Texas

HABS No. Tex-3103

HABS
TEX,
189- PRES.V.
1-

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
District of Texas-3

Historic American Buildings Survey
Bartlett Cocke, District Officer
615 Maverick Bldg., San Antonio TX

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189-PRES. 4.

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FORT LEATON
Presidio, Presidio County, Texas.

Present Owner: The County of Presidio, Marfa, Texas.

Date of Erection: Approximately 1848

Architect: Unknown

Builder: Ben Leaton

Present Condition: Fair; portions have been restored and rebuilt within the last two or three years.

Number of Stories: One

Materials of Construction: Adobe, plaster, cottonwood, cypress and tile.

Other Existing Records: Dallas News, April 12, 1931.
"Voice of the Mexican Border" Texas Centennial issue, edited by Jack Shipman, Marfa, Texas.

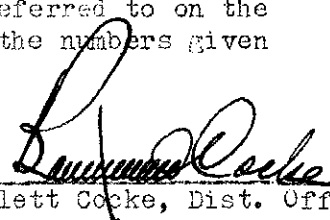
Additional Data:

Fort Leaton is situated on the banks of the Rio Grande River approximately three miles down stream from the town of Presidio. The present building stands on the site of a Spanish Mission, the exact date of erection is not certain, but supposedly erected in 1684. All old Spanish records refer to it as Fortin de San Jose. This is the approximate site of Mission del Apostol Santiago, one of nine missions established in the Big Bend by Father Fray Nicolas Lopez, O.F.M. and Don Juan Dominguez de Mendoza, 1683-84, maintained by Franciscan missionaries for civilizing of the Jumano, Julimes and other Indians.

The adobe walls of Fort Leaton measure from 19" to 42" in thickness; the adobe block construction is now exposed, but at one time the exterior was plastered and coated with a dirty whitewash. Floors of quite a number of the rooms are native tile, which is nothing more than a very hard adobe; color is a salmon pink. Lintels over openings are hand adzed, square cypress timbers. Roof is constructed of round logs, probably cottonwood, 4" to 7" in diameter,

spaced 12" to 16" apart, with 2" to 4" split saplings laid close together, spanning from one round joist to the other. In some cases these split saplings, called waddles, span two units. The saplings are then covered over with palm leaves or thatch, then covered with adobe mud. Ends of waddles lap; direction is changed slightly, giving the ceiling a herring bone effect. Roof is drained by means of scuppers thru parapet walls, draining in half rounded, open, wooden lockouts. Doors, gilles, etc. of cypress; shutters paneled.

The plan includes thirty seven rooms, most of which are standing today. The numbers referred to on the accompanying photographs correspond to the numbers given the rooms on the drawings of the MABS.

Author: 

Bartlett Cooke, Dist. Officer

Date: November 18, 1936.

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7/26/37